

GALATIANS PART 19

GAL. 5.1-12

The book of Galatians is Paul's response to a false doctrine that threatens the very core of the churches in Galatia. Paul is mystified by the Galatian believers' response to this false teaching. He is angry with the false teachers. And he is frustrated with the fact that he cannot be on the scene to fight this fight on their behalf.

His only recourse is to write this letter.

The first two chapters were personal.

Paul *defended* his call to be an apostle and the gospel of grace that he preached among the Galatians.

The next two chapters were persuasive.

Paul *defined* and documented the doctrine of the gospel of grace from the earliest part of the history of Israel. The Gospel that God revealed to and through Abraham was never about the Law – it was never about behavior or about being good enough to please God.

The gospel of grace was always about faith – about believing – about becoming something that we are not – something that we could never be apart from the gift of God.

The last two chapters are practical.

In chapters 5 & 6, Paul *describes* how these principles of grace faith are to be manifested – made visible and real – in the life of the Christian.

Verse 1

When a person is redeemed...

- He is free from the limits of the Law which prevented him from seeing the righteousness of Christ

- He is free from the burden of the Law and the vain efforts to achieve righteousness by good works
- He is free from the curse of the Law which always leads to death and separation from the presence of Almighty God.

That is what Paul means when he writes to the Galatians in the first half of verse 1...

"It is for freedom that Christ has set us free."

While it is important for us to know those things from which we have been set free, it is equally important to know those things for which we have been set free.

In the second half of that verse, Paul goes on to say, "Now that you understand this, stand firm – do not submit again to the yoke of the slavery of the Law."

Rom. 5:2 Through him (Christ) we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God.

NLT: Christ has brought us into this place of undeserved privilege where we now stand, and we confidently and joyfully look forward to sharing God's glory.

The Bible says that "all men have sinned and fall short of the glory of God."

Yet now, according to *The Message*, "We find ourselves standing where we always hoped we might stand – out in the wide open spaces of God's grace and glory, standing tall and shouting our praise."

Paul implores the churches of Galatia: "Stand firm. Now that you have discovered the place of freedom, never be fooled into thinking that there is something you have to do to merit God's love and favor."

In these next two chapters, Paul is going to address practical Christian living. The problem we have with this is that, as soon as

we begin thinking about practical Christian living, we immediately turn our minds to things we can do to be better Christians.

If God says that the Christian should love, then we set our hearts to be more loving.

The Bible says that God loves a cheerful giver, so we determine in our hearts that we are going to be more cheerful about writing that tithe check – starting next week.

The problem is, such resolutions never work. We might be faithful for a while, but we soon begin to fail because these were efforts of the flesh, not of faith. We do not have the power within ourselves to maintain such commitment.

But listen to Paul's warning about this way of thinking:

Verses 2-4

Paul is not condemning circumcision. After all, he was circumcised, yet he is redeemed and filled with the Holy Spirit.

The point Paul is making is that the Law is a unit. It cannot be taken in small doses. You must take it all.

If you go ahead with this plan to be circumcised (And the wording indicates that the Galatians have not yet followed through on their decision.), understand that you must then obey every other law that is on the books.

If you take that first step toward proving yourself to God by “being a good person” – by doing things that you believe God expects of you just so you can earn points of grace from Him – then you can never stop doing such things.

Then your whole Christian life becomes all about “doing” instead of becoming, and before long, you simply drop out of the game because you cannot maintain the intensity and the demands on your soul.

This is what Paul means by the phrase “you are fallen from grace.”

Please understand that this verse has nothing to do with a person's salvation.

There are just too many verses in the Bible that confirm that a person redeemed by the grace of God can never again return to their lost condition.

John 10:27 My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. 28 I give them eternal life, and they will never perish, and no one will snatch them out of my hand. 29 My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all, and no one is able to snatch them out of the Father's hand. 30 I and the Father are one.

Rom. 8:1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.

For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance. Romans 11:29

The Message: God's gifts and God's call are under full warranty – never canceled, never rescinded.

Psalm 37:28; John 5:24 John 6:37, 39; Ephesians 1:13-14; Philippians 1:6; I Peter 1:5, Hebrews 7:25

You have been born again, and you can never get “unborn.” Being born is not what happens because of you, but something that happens to you because of what someone else has done.

Salvation is the gift of God by grace, not by works.

John 1:12 But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.

The phrase “fallen from grace” is a reference, not to salvation, but to sanctification.

To depend on your own energy and resolve and will to become a better Christian means that you are not depending on Christ, so that His power to transform is of no effect.

This doesn't mean that you have made Christ impotent, but that you have made yourself impotent by refusing to yield to God's perfect will and His call on your life.

Lehman Strauss:

Adding law to faith creates paralysis of the spiritual development...When a man serves notice on God that he prefers to depend on what he can do for himself rather than on what Christ has done for him, that man is falling from grace. When a man decides to live in the energy of the flesh, he cuts the supply-line of God's Grace.

The phrase "fallen from grace" means that once you add anything to the gospel of grace other than grace, you have left the context of grace and once more entered into the context of the Law. And the two are incompatible. They are oil and water and cannot mix.

In **verse 5**, Paul reminds us that salvation comes through the work of the Holy Spirit by faith, and then in **verse 6** that neither works nor lack of works has any bearing on salvation – that salvation comes only by "faith working through love."

We did not do anything to get lost except to be born in sin having inherited the sentence of death from our father Adam.

We did not do anything to get lost and we cannot do anything to get saved. By the way, you can also add to those thoughts that neither can you do anything to get unsaved.

In **verses 7-12**, Paul once again allows his frustration concerning these false teachers to come to the surface.

He says, "I don't know who these false teachers are, but I know for certain that it is not the Holy Spirit who is teaching you these things. Whoever it is, this teaching has poisoned your mind.

"Yet I have confidence that you will remain true to the gospel as I taught it to you. And that those who are causing the problems among you by teaching this false doctrine will be punished by God.

From verse 11, it would appear that these false teachers are even teaching the Paul himself requires converts to be circumcised.

Paul continues, "They are even accusing me of teaching and requiring circumcision of my converts. If such a thing were true, then the message of the cross would cease to be offensive and I would no longer have to suffer persecution.

"I wish that those who would require you to be circumcised would carry the process further and completely emasculate themselves."

Wow!

Do you think that Paul is serious about the subject of the doctrine of grace?

Paul says in the beginning of verse 13, "You have been called to freedom, brothers."

That is what the message of the gospel of grace is all about.

Salvation is the free gift of God, given by grace and without requirement to those called to salvation.

We who know Christ are not only...

- Free from the limits of the Law
- Free from the burden of the Law
- Free from the curse of the Law

But we are freed and empowered by grace to do those things which are right and holy and which give God glory.

Free from the law, oh happy condition,
Jesus has bled and there is remission,
Cursed by the law and bruised by the fall,
Grace hath redeemed us once for all.